

OBJECTIONABLE 1950s EC COMICS!



NO. 18
DEC

SHOCK



250
34¢
CANADA

SUSPENSTORIES

**MOLTING TALES OF
TENSION**
IN THE
TRADITION!



Cadillac FEVER!

ARTHUR TELL YE ALL ABOUT IT NOW. AN KIN TELL YE 'CAUSE THINGS COME OUT SO GOOD FER PA. IT WAS ALL ON ACCOUNT OF WHAT PA WANTED, AND AN RECKON AN KNEW HOW BAD HE WANTED IT THAT DAY MR. EVANS COME TO THE FARM PA RUN FER HIM. MR. EVANS COME IN HIS NEW SHINY RED CADILLAC. AN COULD SEE BY THE WAY PA WAS A-LOOKIN' AT IT, HIS EYES A-GLITTERIN', THAT THERE WAS NOTHIN' PA WANTED MORE IN THIS HOLE IN THE WORLD THAN T'BE TAKIN' A RIDE IN A NEW SHINY CADILLAC...

YOU'VE BEEN DOIN' A FINE JOB HEAR, WILKES... BUTTER'S ANY O' MAH OTHER TENANTS, YOU COME IN FER A GOOD SHARE O' THE CROP THIS MONTH. THIRTY DOLLARS, WILKES...

YES, SIR, MISTUH EVANS. THANK YE, SIR!



WHEN MR. EVANS DROVE OFF, PA JUST STOOD THERE WATCHIN' THAT HUNK O' MACHINERY LIKE A STARVIN' MAN STARVIN' AT A POK O' STEAKIN' HOG JOWLS...

LOOK AT 'ER GO, BUTTIE! SEE HOW SHE TAKES THEM RODES WITH SCARCE A BOUNCE. SOMETIMES AN DON'T THINK AN'LL EVER GET T' HOSE IN ONE...

HOW DON'T YE FRET, PA. YE DO GET THIRTY DOLLARS. IF Y'OU SAVE A DOLLAR EV'RY MONTH...



SHINY! YE KNOW YOUNG MAH, BUTTIE. IT'S SHE KNOWS HOW MESSY MOTUW EVANS PAID ME, SHE'LL WANT IT ALL!

YOU RIDE A DOLLAR, PA? YOU NEED IT SO'S MA CAN'T LAY HER HANDS ON IT, YOU SAFE FO' THAT RED...



SO PA HEDA DOLLAR IN A SACK
O' CHICKEN WASH...



BUT MA PICKED JUST THAT MORNIN'
T' FEED THE LAYIN' HENS WHICH IS
MAN JOB...



YE GOT NO RIGHT T' LIE
ABOUT WHAT MISTAH
CARMS PAID YE, OLIVE
WILKS. AN FEEDIN'
THAT DOLLAR WHAR
YE ADD IT!



A MAN'S GOT
A RIGHT T'
SAVE SOMETHIN'
FOR
HIMSELF
DUTIN' HIS
EARNIN'S,
EFFIE MAY!

THAT'S HOW IT WAS WITH MA AN' PAH.
HE'D SAVE A BIT O' MONEY AND SHE'D
FIND IT... LIKE WHEN PA DIVE UP
BRASSIN' T' BRASSIN' THOSE
CENTS A WEEK, ONE NIGHT MA CAME
T' SUFFER WEARIN' A NEW BONNET...



I GOT IT IN TOMMY
ONLY A DOLLAR
AN' FIFTEEN
CENTS!

WHEN'D
YE GET THE
MONEY,
EFFIE MAY?

YE AN'T
SAID YE
LIVE IT,
STONEY!

YE FOOM' MAH
SAVIN'S, DIDN'T
YE P' EFFIE MAY...
WELL, HE'S DEAD!



WHAT AM I AS
A-SAVIN' FOR!

AN' ONO' BUFF KNOWS
YE GOT A QUARTER
T' ADD IN A SACKLACK!
WELL, BE AN RUTHIE
AIN'T GOING TO WITH-
OUT JUS' SO'S YE AN
THIRN AN' FIFTEEN
DOLLARS T' RENT
ONE!



AN' DON'T
WIND
DOWN'
WITHOUT
MA...

YOU AN'T
UP, RUTHIE!

LISTEN, AN' AN MEYER
WANTED MUCH CEF
THAT ONE THING!
AN' GIVE UP MAH
TOBACCOE T' BAKE
THEY MONEY! I'M
BARRIN' YE, EFFIE
MAY! KEEP YOHAN
HANDS OFF'N
WHAT I SAY!



IT DIDN'T DO NO GOOD FOR YA T' BURN MA, HE'S
HIDE A QUARTER IN SOME OUTLANDISH PLACE AN'
BU'D SHUFF IT OUT LIKE AN OL' HOUND DOG
TRACIN' A POSSUM...

YE STOLE MAH MONEY
FROM THE CANNY IN
THE SMOKE HOUSE,
DIDN'T YE, EFFIE MAY?

AN' I NEEDED T' BUY
A SACK FOR MAH
FRUIT FOR A DRESS
FOR ME! YAIN'T
GOIN' TOROUSSE ME
A NEW DRESS?



WE GOT PLENTY O'
FEED SACKS! WHY
DIDN'T YE USE ONE
O' THEM? I'LL
TELL YE, YE JUST
WANT T' TAKE MAH
SAVIN'S AN' SPEND
'EM YOUNG A MEAN
WOMAN, ET... AN' YE'RE
MAKIN' ME MEAN!



BUT PA'D GET OVER HIS MAD RIGHT QUICK AND I'D BE FROM THE WHEEL. WAGON 'T THE TRUCKS AUCKIN' WITH HIM AND HE'D BE TALKIN' 'BOUT HOW SORRY HE WAS FER SA...

POOR EFF SHE GITS A-HANKERIN' FER THINGS LIKE THE WIMMEN IN TOWN GOT, AND SHE CAN'T HELP SWIPIN' MAN MONEY.

WHY'S IT SO SPECIAL IMPORTANT FER YE T' BIDE IN A CABLAC, FRY TNEY'S WHAT AN CAIN'T FERRIE?

FUNNY RUTHIE, BUT TNA'S SOMETHIN' AN DON'T UNDERSTAN' MANSELF. AN DON'T KNOW WHEN AN STARTED WANTIN' IT. ALL AN DO KNOW B... AN WANT THEY BIDE SO BAD AN KIN TASTE IT!

AND AN FEEL BAD FER YE, PA. AN LOVE YE AN' AN WANT FER YE THAVE EVERYTHIN' YE WANT!



THEN WE'D GET T' THE AUCTION AND PA'D BE FAYIN' HARDLY NO NEED T' THE DOD'S ON. HE'D BE A-LOOKIN' AT JES WYLER'S BIG BLACK CABLAC...

... THE WAY SHE SEFS THERE, A-STANDIN' STILL BUT EDOWN' LIKE SHE'S BOVIN' ALL THE SAME!

JES WYLER'S FIGH, PA... AND KE AN'T...



POOR PA. AN GLESS AN'L. HEVER WANT ANY-THIN' AS MUCH AS HE DO...

JES ONE RIDG, RUTHIE! THAT'S ALL AN WANT, THEN AN COULD DO BACFAN' WORK AN' WORK AN' NEVER MIND A BUL. AN DON' RECKON AN'M ASKIN' FER TOO MUCH AN AN, RUTHIE?

NO, PA! YE GOT THEY MUCH COMIN'!



IF IT HADN'T A-BEEN THAT AN LOVED PA SO, AN HEVER WOULD'VE GARED BUN OVER TO JES WYLER LIKE AN DID. HE JUST BOOKED AT ME LIKE AN WAS A CRAZY OL' JAYBIRD...

PA WON'T BURT' YOUNG CABLAC NONE, MR. WYLER, AN' HE CAN DRIVE #000, 700! HE DRIV THE FLYVER FER A LONG TIME TILL SHE GIVE OUT!

JES WYLER... HIM IN THEM FANCY CLOTHES... HE NEVER SAID NOTHIN'. HE JUST LAUGHED...

YOUNG A STAFFY BEAR MR. WYLER. LARREN! #0 ON LARREN! AN HOPE YE FACE FALLS OFF!

DON'T PAY HER NO YENTION, MR WYLER! SHE DON' MEAN NOTHIN'.



PA CRACKED ME AWAY AN' AFTER THE AUCTION, WE DRIV HOME...

AN'M BLAD I TRED T' GIT YE THEY BIDE, PA... AN I'LL KEEP ON TRYIN'...

IT WADN'E OUT TO BE A BROWN FOOL, RUTHIE! AN' IT'S ALL YOUNG BOY'S FAULT! DRAT HER!



PA'S FACE GOT REAL DARK AND GRIM AS HE STRODE...

SHE BETTER KEEP HER HANDS OFF MAH BAWNY? THAT'S ALL AN GOT T' SAY! SHE BETTER!

AN THOUGHT PA WAS MAD 'WUFFY' 'SINAT MA WHEN WE GOT BACK T' THE FARM. MESSIE THEN MA WOULD OUST TAIN' HIS MONEY. BUT HE JUST SHIMMERED AND LOOKED SAD...

AT LEAST AN GOT SOMETHIN' T' SHOW FOR THE MONEY. IF HE HAD FOURIN' WAY, HE'D SPEND FIFTEEN DOLLARS BUYIN' A CADILLAC, AN IT'D BE OVER AN' DONE IN ONE DAY!

AN'S NEVER FORRYT' 'EM...



AN' AN AIN'T GOIN' T' SHWE YE THET CHANCE, GUSSE! AN AIN'T ACHIEV' GOIN' T' LET YE THROW NO MONEY AWAY ON FOOLISHNESS WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH AN NEEDS!

AN'LL SPEND MAH MONEY THE WAY AN BEES FITT'! AN' HE BEEP FOURIN' PAHS OFF'N ITT' HEART!



WHEN PA' WAS T' FEELIN' LOW, AN'D ASK HIM T' TAKE ME HUNTER, WE ONLY HAD ONE SHOROUW T'WEEN US, BUT PA'D DO MOST OF THE SHOOTIN'. HE'D BRING DOWN A 'COON OR FOSSEM AND HE'D TALK AN FEWST THINGS...

YE GOT 'EM, PA! AN DO BELIEVE THERE AIN' NO BETTER SPOT IN THE WOODS COUNT'Y!



BUT WHEN HE WASN'T SHOOTIN', HE'D GIT T' THINKIN'... THINKIN' 'BOUT MA AND HIS MONEY AND THE CADILLAC RIDE HE COULDN' GET... AND HE'D LOOK SO UNHAPPY IT LIKE T' BROWE MY HEART...

DON'T WORRY, PA! SOME DAY YE'LL BE RICH! THEN WHEDE YOU'LL GIT EVERYTHIN' YOU WANT!

NO, NUTHE! I'LL NEVER BE RICH, AN AN JES' WANT ONE THING... THAT RIDE!



THEN, SUDDENLIKE, HIS JAW'D CLAMP TIGHT AS A WEASL TRAP AND HE'D JES' BLAST AWAY AT BOTHIN' WITH THE SHOTGUN... LIKE MESSIE MA WAS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE IN FRONT O' HIM...



AN' THINK THE TIME AN FELT SACGEST WAS WHEN PA AN' ME WAS IN TOWN ONE DAY AN' WE WAS PASSIN' THE AUTO RENTIN' PLACE. PA JUST STOOD THERE LOOKIN' AT THE CADILLAC IN THE WINDOW, AN' FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, AN SEEM BY PA CRYIN'...



AN DON'T RECKON I'LL GIT T' RIDE IN ONE O' THEM... CHUCK... NEVER...

AN GOT ALL KNOTTED AND SHAKIN' INSIDE AN' I TOOK PA'S HAND AND LED 'EM AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND MADE OUT LIKE AN DIDN'T SEE 'EM CRYIN'...



WE'D BEST BE GOIN' PA, IF I'VE YOUNG GOWN T' BUY THEN NEEDS FOR PLANTIN'...

RUTHIE, AN DON'T KNOW HOW AN'M GOIN' MAKE YOUNG MA STOP STEALIN' MAN SAVIN'S... BUT AN WILL DO HELP ME, AN'LL STOP 'EM!

WELL, ONE DAY THE LID BLOWED OFF, MA'D STOLE THE LAST MONEY SHE'D EVER STEAL FROM PA 'CAUSE SHE LAID THERE BY THE COOKSTOVE WITH A HOLE IN HER EAR AND PA'S HAND-DAVED DOLLAR STILL IN HER HAND...



MA...? DEAD?

AN BOKE INTO TOWN T' SHERIFF BERT... (caption)

SHERIFF HOYT ASKED ME LOTS O' QUESTIONS AS HE TOOK ME HOME...

ME AN' SHERIFF HOYT FOUND PA A-TITTIN' AND A-STARRIN' AT MA AND HE WAS JES' AS WHITE AS SHE WAS ONLY SHE WAS EMPTY O' BLOOD...



NO, SHER, AN DIDN'T GO FER NO DOCTOR, SHERIFF, AN COULD SEE MA WAS DEAD AS SHE'S EVER A-GOIN' T' BE!

ALL RIGHT, RUTHIE, LET'S GO BACK T'THE FIRM...



YE DIDN'T SEE YOUNG PA JERKIN' WITH YOUNG MA, DID YE, RUTHIE?

NO, BUT THEY WAS ALWAYS ARGUIN'. PA'D SAVE A L'L MONEY AND MA'D SPEND IT AND HE'D GET FORTYFIVE DADS THIS MORNIN' HE SURED HE'D KILL HER!



YE'D BEST BE COMIN' WITH AC, CLAYD WILKES!

THE NEXT TIME AN SAW PA WAS WHEN THEY BRUNG HIM UP FO' TRIAL, AN WAS SITTIN' IN A NICE CHAIR NEXT T' JUDGE BARRIS AN' SOMEBODY WAS ASKIN' ME QUESTIONS...



NOW, RUTHIE, TELL THE COURT EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED!

DON'T BE AFRAID, RUTHIE. NOBODY CAN MESS YOU!

YES, SHER...

SO AN TEL' MAJ STORY...



AN SEEN PA BUST INTO THE HOUSE, HE WAS STEALIN' MAD, HE DUSSED MA... POINTED THE SHOTGUN AT HER... AN PULLED THE TRIGGER, PA KILLED MA!

RUTHIE?

PA JUMPED UP, SCREAMIN' AT ME... TEARS A-RUNNIN' DOWN HIS FACE...

PUTTIN, WHY'D YOU FEEL 'EM THEY DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT YOU AN DOIN'?

AN HAD T' TELL, PA' AN HAD T'!



I FELT SOX THE WAY PA CARRIED ON, BUT IT WAS OVER SOON... WHEN THEN TWELVE GENT'S WENT OUT AND CAME BACK AND ONE OF 'EM SAID...

WE, THE JURY, FIND THE DEFENDANT GUILTY AS CHARGED...



AN' AN FELT SORRY THE NIGHT THEY BURIED UP PA IN THE ELECTRICAL CHAIR...



THE NEXT MORNIN', SHERIFF HOYT CAME BY T' PICK ME UP AN' TAKE ME UP TO THE CEMETERY... THEY WAS SOON T' BURY PA...

POOR KID! CHOSE... YOU'RE ALL ALONE, NOW...

WHERE'S PA? WHEN THEY BRINGIN' HIM?



AN' THEN AN HEARD IT... THE HUM OF THE ENGINE... COMIN' DOWN THE ROAD... COMIN' FROM THE STATE PRISON. BRINGIN' PA. AN' THEN AN SAW IT... AND AN WAS GLAD PA WAS FINALLY GETTIN' HIS RIDE IN A CADILLAC... A CADILLAC HEARSE...



AFTER THEY BURIED PA, AN WENT OVER T' SHERIFF HOYT...

YOU BETTER TAKE ME INTO TOWN, SHERIFF? AN GOT SOMETHIN' T' SAY...



I'LL, AN KNEW ABOUT THAT CADILLAC HEARSE THEY GOT UP AT THE STATE PRISON. THAT'S WHY AN BLOWED THAT HOLE IN ME WITH THE SHOTGUN AND AS A FIST AND BLAMED IT ON PA. I KNEW IT WAS THE ONLY WAY HE'D EVER GET THAT RIDE.



AN' NOW THEY ARE COMIN' FOR ME AN' I'LL BE FOLLOWIN' PA SHORTLY. PUNNY T' HINNY AN'N LOOKIN' FORWARD TO IT! AN SORTA CRYIN' FOR CADILLAC FEYER.



The

TRAP

THERE WAS GREYNESS THAT BLANKETED EVERYTHING THAT GRIZZLY MORNING... A GREY EAST TO MATT'S TASTELESS COFFEE... A GREY DIMNESS COATING THE KITCHEN WALLS... A GREYNESS THAT SEEMED TO CLOSE IN ON HIM SO THAT HE EVEN FELT GREY INSIDE HIMSELF, MATT HALL HAD THE TRAPPED HOPELESS AIR OF A CRIMINAL ON THE WITNESS STAND WHOSE ALIBI HAD JUST BEEN BROKEN. YET, MATT WAS NO CRIMINAL... EXCEPT, PERHAPS, IN THE JAUNICED EYES OF HIS WIFE, HIS COOL RESENTLESS PROSECUTOR...

GRAY! SO YOU DESERVE NONE BUT OF LIFE THAN THIS WISCRABLE SHACK AND THIS CRUMMY NEIGHBORHOOD. WE'VE ONLY BEEN HERE A MONTH. BUSINESS WILL PICK UP, INHENT YOU'LL BEE! WE'LL BE ON TOP OF THE HEAP AGAIN, LIKE WE USED TO...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, A MONTH FOR THREE YEARS NOW... THREE YEARS, MATT... WE'VE BEEN GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE, OUR NEXT MOVE WILL BE OUT ON THE STREET!

IARNE HALL SLIPPED INTO HER SEAT AT THE KITCHEN TABLE AND THE COOL METALLIC GLEAM OF HER SPOON IN THE TUGAN BOWL MATCHED THE IGY STEEL OF HER EYES...

WE COULD MOVE TO A BETTER PLACE, OR, WENET I'VE OFFERED TO CASH IN MY LIFE-INSURANCE POLICY. WE GOT ABOUT THIRTY-~~SIX~~ HUNDRED SOOKED INTO THAT...



THAT POLICY IS ALL THE SECURITY I'VE GOT IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU, AND I'VE GIVEN IT A LOT OF THOUGHT, MATT. SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU!

DON'T, DON'T SALK LIKE THAT, IRENE! I DON'T LIKE IT!



A CONTENTFUL BEER HARDENED
HERE'S NORMALLY ATTRACTIVE FACE.

YOU'RE STUPID, BATT! HAVE
YOU EVER THOUGHT OF COL-
LECTING ALL THE DUMB-
ARSE MONEY NOW.. CRAZY,
WHERE YOU'RE ALIVE!
THE WHOLE TWENTY
GRAND..!

YOU'RE
TALK-
ING
CRAZY,
HERE!

AM IF WE'LL SEE?
I'VE BEEN ENJOYING A
LOT ABOUT IT THE LAST
FEW WEEKS, AND I'VE
BEEN DOING SOMETHING.
FOOD? WE GOT IT JUST
ABOUT ALL ARRANGED!

"WE?"
WHO'S
"WE?"

MR. GROVER AND ME! HE'S THE
UNDERTAKER! YOU'VE PASSED
HIS PLACE... GROVER'S FUNERAL
HOME... TWO BLOODS DOWN... ON
THE CORNER, I'VE BEEN DISCUS-
SING IT WITH HIM. HE'S COMING
OVER THIS MORNING TO TALK
TO ME ABOUT IT...



THE GREYNESS OF THE DAY TURNED EVEN GREYER
WHEN MR. GROVER ARRIVED. HE QUICKLY EXPLAINED
HIS PLAN TO BATE...

SO FAR IT SOUNDS
PRETTY GOOD. MR.
GROVER BUT WHAT
ABOUT THE POLICE?

I'VE LIVED IN THIS TOWN
ALL MY LIFE, HALL. I KNOW
CHIEF BOLAN. HE'LL TAKE
A QUICK LOOK AT WHAT
APPEARS TO BE A STAB
IN THE HEART. HE'LL SEE
THE BLOOD-STAINED
KNIFE, AND...



...AND MR. GROVER WILL
MAKE SURE HE'S THERE
TO SAY YOU'RE DEAD!
DON'T YOU SEE, WALLY?
CHIEF BOLAN WILL TAKE
MR. GROVER'S WORD
FOR IT, AND...

WHAT DO
YOU GET
OUT OF THIS,
MR. GROVER?

TWENTY-
FIVE
PERCENT!
FIVE
GRAND!
THAT'S NOT
FOO MUCH
CONSIDERING
MY FISH...



GRAY, GROVER!
YOU GOT YOURSELF
A DEAL?

GOOD! NOW THE FIRST
THING YOU HAVE TO DO IS CHANGE
YOUR APPEARANCE! YOU'RE
NOT WELL-KNOWN HERE, SO
IF YOU GROW A MUSTACHE
AND BEGAN WEARING HORNS-
RIMMED GLASSES, AND PEOPLE
NOT TO KNOW YOU THAT WAY.



WHEN THIS WHOLE THING IS
OVER, YOU COULD DROP THE
DISGUISE... LOOK LIKE THE REAL
YOU AGAIN... AND NO ONE
WOULD BE THE WISER!

YOU SURE
NOT
EVERY-
THING
FIGURED
OUT,
GROVER!

I
TOLD
YOU,
BATT!



AND SO, DURING THE NEXT THREE WEEKS, MATT HALL CULTIVATED A MOUTHCANE, STICKING INDOORS SO NO ONE WOULD SEE HIM. AT THE END OF THAT TIME, HE'D BEGIN TO GOGULATE FREDDY AND HIS THICK-LEGGED GLASSES AND HERRY BLACK MOUTHCANE BECAME FAMILIAR TO HIS NEW NEIGHBORS...

EVENH, MRS. GOOD EVENING, MR. SPRADY...
HALL...



MEANWHILE HE'D BEEN GETTING CONSTANT INSTRUCTION FROM MR. GROVER...

REMEMBER! SHALLOW BREATHING, MATTI TAKE ONE DEEP BREATH WHILE ANYONE IS LOOKING AND THE WHOLE DEAL IS WRECKED!

I'LL REMEMBER, MR. GROVER!



LARRY GROVER'S CALM CONFIDENT MANNER STEADED MATT FOR THE OCCASION AND WHEN THE NIGHT FINALLY ARRIVED, MATT WAS WELL-PREPARED. FIRST, THE MORTICIAN BOLDLY MANUFACTURED A "WOUND OVER THE HEART OF THE MURDERER-MAN-TO-BE..."

LORD? IT LOOKS SO SO... REAL...
GROVE...

I'VE HAD PLENTY OF EXPERIENCE REPAIRING WOUNDS LIKE THIS! I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO REPAIR THE PROBLEM.



THEN THE MORTICIAN APPLIED A "DEATH FALLOUT" TO MATT'S BODY AND HIS FACE...

I'LL DO MY BEST TO FIX IT SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO BE THERE TOO LONG!

IT'S YOUR MORTUARY!



AND AN HOUR LATER, SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT, MATT HALL STRETCHED HIMSELF OUT ON THE WEEDY PATCH OF LAWN OUTSIDE HIS HOME. MR. GROVER POURED A STICKY RED LIQUID OVER THE HOLE SENT THROUGH HIS JACKET AND ON THE GRASS AROUND HIM...

REAL BLOOD? WHERE'D YOU GET IT?

WHERE DO YOU THINK I GOT IT? I'M AN UNDER-TAKER!



THEN THE MORTICIAN KNELT BESIDE MATT AND SPOKE IN HIS USUAL CONFIDENT MANNER...

GIVE ME A MINUTE OR SO TO GET AWAY, THEN TAKE THE KNIFE, SWEAR IT IN THE BLOOD, AND TOSS IT IN THE ROAD NEXT PITCH YOUR EMPTY WALLET IN THE BURNER! THERE WILL TAKE OVER FROM THERE.



A FEW MOMENTS LATER, MRS. HALL STEPPED OUTSIDE. SHE STOOD OVER HER HUSBAND, STARING DOWN AT THE SHADY SCENE, THEN SCREAMED...



HER SHRILL SCREAM RANGED ALONG THE DARK, QUIET HOMES THAT LINED THE STREET. HERE AND THERE, A LIGHT BLINKED ON. INSIDE SCREAMS AGAIN. PEOPLE CLAD IN NIGHTCLOTHS FOUNDED FROM THE BLAZERS.



WHAT'S GOING ON?
DIE?

WHAT HAPPENED?

POLICE! CALL THE POLICE!
MY HUSBAND!
HE... SOB... HE'S BEEN STABBED!

UNDERTAKER LARRY GROVER ARRIVED AT THE SCENE ALONG WITH CHIEF RED McLAN AND A SLEEPY-EYED POLICEMAN...



YOU DON'T HEAR HIS DEAR, GROVER?

THERE'S A BRILLIANT QUESTION FOR AN UNDERTAKER! LOOK, McLAN... WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS! GET SOMETHING TO COVER HIM UP...

AS THE POLICEMAN MOVED TOWARD THE PATROL CAR TO GET A BLANKET...



HEY! LOOK AT THIS! A WIFE IN THE ROAD. IT'S GOT BLOOD ON IT!

DON'T TOUCH THAT MYSTERY!

THE OFFICER PICKED UP THE EVIDENCE WITH A HANDKERCHIEF AND PROUDLY PRESENTED IT TO CHIEF McLAN...



GOOD WORK, FLEET. LOOKS LIKE THIS IS THE MURDER WEAPON, DOESN'T IT?

TAKE IT EASY, McLAN. SHE'S HAD A BAD SHOCK...

LARRY PUT ON A STERLING PERFORMANCE AS A GRIEVING WIDOW...



NO! SOB... NO! MATT DON'T HAVE AN EMBLEM IN THE WORLD, OH, MATT... SOB... MATT...

IT WAS A MARRIAGE, McLAN. YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THEM LATELY TO KNOW EXACTLY SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE ABOUT THEM, FOO!



LAY OFF, GROVER! I'M DOING MY BEST. IT'S JUST...

MEAN! I'M AN UNDER-TAKER. MY PLACE IS JUST A COUPLE OF BLOCKS DOWN. IF YOU'VE LIKE, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOUR POOR HUSBAND'S BEREAVEMENT!

THANK SOB... THANK YOU

A MOMENT LATER, SOMEONE FOUND MATT'S EMPTY WALLET...



YES... HE'D COME TO THE BANK THIS AFTERNOON HE HAD THE BEST MONEY, SOB... WITH HIM...

WELL, THAT'S WHAT IT GROVER. IT'S A MARRIAGE, ALL NIGHT AND I'LL GET THE MURDERING TRIP IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!

THE NEXT MORNING, MRS. VINCENT, THE HALLS' PLUMP AND KINDLY NEIGHBOR, ACCOMPANIED IRONE HALL TO THE UPPER FUNERAL PARLOR. IT WAS ALL PART OF THE PLAN. SHE STOOD BESIDE THE SOBBING WIDOW AS THEY VIEWED MATT'S STIFF WHITE BODY. . .

FOUR GIRLS SUCH A TRAGEDY!
TIME IS A GREAT HEALER, MRS. VINCENT! WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND COMFORT HER IN HER HOUR OF MOURNING. . .



IRONE LOOKED UP WITH TEAR FILLED EYES. . .

MATT ALWAYS SAID HE... HE WANTED TO... SOB... TO BE CRYSTALIZED. CAN YOU...? I HAVE A GYMNASIUM IN THE NEAR, MRS. HALL. WOULD YOU FOLLOW ME...



MR. GROVER CLOSED THE COFFIN AND WHEELED IT OUT. IRONE TURNED TO MRS. VINCENT. . .

OH, I'M ALL RIGHT NOW, MRS. VINCENT! YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THIS! YOU'VE BEEN MORE THAN KIND. . . YOU FOOL DEAR! YOU DO NEED SOME ONE TO LEAN ON! NO! I'LL STAY! I WANT TO. . .



MRS. VINCENT HAD REACTED JUST AS THEY'D PLANNED... BUT IRONE'S HESITATION HAD GIVEN MATT ENOUGH TIME TO LEAP UP ON THE COFFIN AS IT WAS ROLLED DOWN THE LONG HALL TO THE CREMATORIUM. . .

OH, MRS. VINCENT! YOU'RE SO KIND! THINK NOTHING OF IT! WHAT'S A NEIGHBOR FOR! GOSH! MR. GROVER WENT THIS WAY. . . GOSH! IN THAT DIRECTION!



AND SO, IRONE CRIED AND MR. GROVER UTTERED FOND WORDS, AND MRS. VINCENT LOOKED ON WITH MORBID FASCINATION AS THE EMPTY COFFIN WAS ROLLED THROUGH THE YAWNING FLURGE DOOR IN THE HUGE BRICK WALL. . .



AND NOW, WE COMMIT THE BODY OF MATT HALL TO THE CONSUMING FIRES.

AND AFTERSWARDS, THE THREE CONSPIRATORS HAD A HEARTY LAUGH. . .

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN MRS. VINCENT'S FACE! I WATCHED FROM BEHIND THAT CURTAIN. . . A GREAT BIT OF A ACTING! ALL THROUGHT AROUND, TO GET A FORTY-THOUSAND DOLLAR PERFORMANCE?



THEN MATT TURNED TO HIS WIFE AND THEIR ACCOMPLICE...



MOM WHAT? NOW YOU GET OUT OF THIS COUNTRY AND LAY LOW IN MEXICO OR SOUTH AMERICA. IRVINE WILL JOIN YOU IN A YEAR OR SO WHEN ALL THIS HAS SLOWLY DROPPED AND THE INSURANCE COMPANY HAS PAID OFF.



A YEAR?? I DON'T WANT TO BE AWAY FROM YOU FOR THAT LONG, HONEY!

MATT, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO RISK SPENDING EVERYTHING! DO AS MR. IRVINE SAYS! THINK OF THE MONEY WE'LL HAVE WHEN I JOIN YOU!



WHAT ABOUT DOMESTIC? I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT COVERS!

I THOUGHT OF THAT! I'LL ADVANCE YOU TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND, MATT! IRVINE CAN PAY ME BACK! YOU CAN LIVE FREE FOR A YEAR OR THAT IN SOUTH AMERICA! HERE...

MATT SMILED WRYLY, TOOK THE MONEY, AND STARTED FOR THE DOOR...



WELL, WHY NOT?? I CAN USE A LONG VACATION! STORGE, HONEY.

BOLD OF YOU, MATT! YOU'D BETTER SHAVE OFF THAT Moustache OR WE'LL ALL HAVE A LONG VACATION IN A PENITENTIARY!

MATT HALL WENT TO NEW YORK, ARRANGED FOR A PASSPORT UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME, AND BOARDED A SHIP BOUND FOR ARGENTINA...



THOMPSON? RICHARD THOMPSON?

YES, SIR? CABIN #3? THAT'S FORWARD ON DECK A, SIR...

A YEAR PASSED AND MATT WRITES IN RIO FOR IRVINE, BUT IRVINE DIDN'T COME. HE WROTE, BUT SHE DID NOT ANSWER. FINALLY, AFTER EIGHTEEN MONTHS, HE FLEW HOME...



TO BLAZES WITH THE RISKY SIDE - THING'S HAPPENED TO HIM. I KNOW IT!

PILLOR, MR. THOMPSON?

THE HOUSE HAD CHANGED. IT WAS ALL FIXED UP. THE LAWN WAS LUSH AND GREEN WITH EXPENSIVE SHRUBS. MATT RANG THE BELL...



SHE'S SURE BEEN SPENDING THE DOLLAR!

IRENE BLANCHED WHEN SHE SAW MATT. WHEN HE STEPPED FORWARD TO PUT HIS ARMS AROUND HER, SHE FOUGHT HIM OFF.

IRENE! MY LORD! HAVE I DREAMED THAT MUCH? IT'S NOT MATT... YOUR HUSBAND!

MR... WHAT? LISTEN, MISTER, YOU'D BETTER GET OUT' OF HERE! YOU'VE GOT ME CON-FUSED WITH SOMEONE ELSE!



SHE BACKED OFF AS MATT STARED AT HER.

GET OUT THE CORNER, IRENE! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

IRENE? WHO IS THAT MAN? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH MY WIFE, SIR?



MATT STARED AT LARRY GROVER AND A CHILL CREEPT UP HIS SPINE. THE REALIZATION DAWNED UPON HIM FINALLY...

YOUR... YOUR WIFE? WHY YOU DIRTY DOUBLE-CROSSING... SO THAT'S HOW IT WAS! YOU TWO PLANNED IT THIS WAY, SHOPPING ME OFF WHILE YOU LIVED IT UP ON MY INSURANCE DOLLAR! WELL, I GOT FIFTEEN GRAND COMIN' TO ME AND I WANT IT!



GET OUT OF MY HOUSE BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE, MISTER!

DON'T FUD ME, GROVER. YOU WOULDN'T DARE! IF I SPELL THE BEANS, YOU'LL GO UP THE RIVER WITH ME, YOU CAN HAVE IRENE! JUST HAND OVER FIFTEEN GRAND... NOW...



LARRY GROVER PICKED UP THE PHONE...

GIVE ME THE POLICE!

YOU CAN'T BLUFF ME, GROVER! I'M STAYING! IT'S YOUR FUNERAL FOOD YOU KNOW!



CHIEF McLEIN GOT TO THE HOUSE IN A HURRY AND LISTENED TO MATT'S STORY...

...SO THE WHOLE DEAL WAS A HOAX. I WAS NEVER KILLED...

I ALWAYS LIKE TO LAY MY HANDS ON YOU GONN MEN, BUT THIS TIME, YOU TRIED TO SHARE DOWN THE WRONG CUSTOMER, MISTER. I SAW MATT HALL'S BODY MYSELF! TAKE HIM DOWNTOWN, FLOYD...



THEY BOOKED MATT, "MUGGED" HIM, FINGERPRINTED HIM, AND SLAPPED HIM IN A CELL AS HE SCREAMED IN PROTEST.

CHECK MY FINGER-PRINTS! YOU'LL SEE IF I'M NOT MATT HALL!

FINGERPRINTS? THAT'S IT, CHIEF! I THOUGHT THEY LOOKED FAMILIAR...



THE JALMO MAN'S PRINTS WERE MATCHED WITH THOSE TAKEN FROM A BLOODY KNIFE FOUND IN THE ROAD NEAR THE SCENE OF MATT HALL'S "MURDER" ALMOST TWO YEARS BEFORE...

THEY MATCH? NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! WE'VE GOT MATT HALL'S KILLER!



MATT HALL FELT AS THOUGH HE WERE LIVING THROUGH A NIGHTMARE FROM THAT MOMENT ON. HE WAS PUT ON TRIAL...

...AND I WILL NOT ONLY SHOW THAT THIS MAN...THIS RICHARD THOMPSON...MURDERED MATT HALL, BUT THAT HE RETURNED TO EXTORT MONEY FROM HIS VICTIM'S WIDOW...



MRS. WINE HALL BROVER TESTIFIED...

MATT HALL? HIMP? HOW COULD HE BE? MATT HALL IS DEAD & CREATED!



MATT HALL PLEADED...

WAKE SPOKE TELL YOU THE FACTS? THE FBI-ONES WILL MAKE HIM TELL YOU THE COFFIN WAS EMPTY? THE FBI-ONES WILL REFRAIN FROM FURTHER OUTBURSTS.



MRS. VINCENT TESTIFIED...

I SAW THE BODY IN THE COFFIN. I SAW THE COFFIN SLID INTO THE FURNACE. IF THAT MAN IS MATT HALL, I'M SHAY!



MATT HALL'S LAWYER COULD GET NOWHERE WITH MRS. VINCENT...

SURE HE LOOKS LIKE MATT HALL WHEN YOU PUT THAT MUSTACHE AND GLASSES ON HIM, WHO WOULDN'T? BUT IT'S NOT HIMP? MRS. VINCENT? ARE YOU SURE? YOU ALSO - LUTELY SHAY!



GRIEF WILKIN'S TESTIMONY BLINKED THE CASE, AND AFTER ONLY 33 MINUTES, THE JURY RETURNED A VERDICT OF...



THERE WAS A GREYNESS THAT BLANKETED EVERYTHING THAT DRIEDLY MORNING... A GREY CAST TO THE PRISON WALLS... A GREYNESS TO THE SCAFFOLD THEY'D BUILT... A GREYNESS THAT SERVED TO CLOSE IN ON MATT SO THAT HE EVEN FELT GREY INSIDE HIMSELF AS THEY SLID THE ROPE AROUND HIS NECK AND SPRUNG THE TRAP...



...AND HUNG HIM FOR HIS OWN MURDER! THE END

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

THIS IS AN APPEAL FOR ACTION!

THE PROBLEM. Comics are under fire—horror and crime comics in particular. Due to the efforts of various do-gooders and "do gooder" groups, a large segment of the public is being led to believe that certain comic magazines cause juvenile delinquency, warp the minds of America's youth, and affect the development of the personalities of those who read them! Among these do-gooders are a psychiatrist who has made a lucrative career of attacking comic magazines, certain publishing companies who do not publish comics and who would benefit by their demise, many groups of adults who would like to blame their lack of ability as responsible parents on comic mags instead of on themselves, and various assorted headline hunters. These people are militant. They complain to local police officials, to local magazine retailers, to local wholesalers, and to their congressmen. They complain and complain and threaten and threaten. Eventually, everyone gets frightened. The newsdealer gets frightened. He removes the books from display. The wholesaler gets frightened. He refuses shipments. The congressmen get frightened. "November is coming!" They start an investigation. This wave of hysteria has seriously threatened the very existence of the whole comic magazine industry.

WE BELIEVE. Your editors sincerely believe that the claim of these crusaders—that comics are bad for children—is nonsense. If we, in the slightest way, thought that horror comics, crime comics, or any other kind of comics were harmful to our readers, we would cease publishing them and direct our efforts toward something else!

And we're not alone in our belief. For example, Dr. David Abrahamson, eminent criminologist, in his book, "Who Are The Guilty?" says, "Comic books do not lead to crime, although they have been widely blamed for it. . . . In my experience as a psychiatrist, I cannot remember having seen one boy or girl who has committed a crime, or who became autistic or psychotic . . . because he or she read comic books." A group led by Dr. Freda Kohn, Mental Health Chairman of the 88 Congress of the P. T. A., decided that living room violence has "a decided deterrent effect on juvenile delinquency." Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that horror comic books do not organize criminal behavior in children. . . . In a way, the horror comics may do some good. . . . Children may use fantasy, as stimulated by the "comics" as a means of working out natural feelings of aggressiveness.

We also believe that a large portion of our usual readership of horror and crime comics is made up of adults. We believe that those who oppose comics are a small minority. Yet this minority is causing the hysteria. The voice of the majority— you who buy comics, read them, enjoy them, and are not harmed by them—has not been heard!

WHAT YOU MUST DO. Unless you act now, the pressure from this minority may force comics from the American scene. It is members of this minority who threaten the local retailers, who threaten the local wholesalers, who have sent letters to the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency (now investigating the comic industry).

IT IS TIME THAT THE MAJORITY'S VOICE BE HEARD!

It is time that the Senate Subcommittee hears from YOU—each and every one of you!

If you agree that comics are harmless entertainment, wear a letter or a postcard **TODAY!**

The Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

and in your own words, tell them so. Make it a nice, polite letter! In the case of you younger readers, it would be more effective if you could get your parents to write for you, or perhaps add a P.S. to your letter, as the Senate Subcommittee may not have much respect for the opinions of minors.

Of course, if you or your parents disagree with us, and believe that comics ARE bad, let your sentiments be known on that too! The important thing is that the Subcommittee hear from actual comic book readers and/or their parents, rather than from people who never read a comic magazine in their lives, but simply want to destroy them.

It is also important that your local newsdealer be encouraged to continue carrying, displaying, and selling all kinds of comics. Speak to him. Have him speak to his wholesaler.

Wherever you can, let your voice and the voices of your group be heard in protest over this issue against comics.

But first . . . right now . . . please write that letter to the Senate Subcommittee.

Sincerely,
Your grateful editors
(for the whole E. C. Gang)



BLOWHARD

The tall man in the frazzled coat shambled almost absent-mindedly into the bank . . . glanced around uncertainly . . . then stepped up to the wooden railing surrounding the manager's cubicle.

"Can I help . . ." the chubby gentleman seated at the spacious desk started to inquire, a rigid professional smile creasing his waxy features.

"You're the manager, huh?" the tall man mumbled, as if reassuring himself. He snuffled, glanced around the bank again, then fumbled a paper bag from the torn pocket of his sagging coat.

"This is a robbery," he announced, in a flat, tired voice. "I got a bomb in this sack, mister . . . unless you hand over all the dough you got in the cashier's booth, I'm gonna drop this bag on the floor and kill all of us!"

The manager's eyes bulged like white onions on toothpicks as he stared in complete bewilderment at the tall man and, then, at the crumpled bag his visitor held. Before he could splutter a protest, the tall man was mumbling again, "I need the money bad," he muttered. "If I can't get my hands on some manna I might just as well be dead. That's why I'm ready to kill myself and all of us . . ."

The anxiety on the manager's fat face vanished. His eyes crinkled as he leaned back in his chair. He snorted through his nose, slapped his thigh and began to roar with delight. The squat bank guard waddled over . . . suspiciously, did neither looked over from her cage . . . the line of four depositors turned and stared.

"That old gag," the manager gasped, between spasms of laughter, "it's been used so often that it's old even for television! The bomb in the paper bag . . . HAAAAAA!"

The bank depositors closed in and the buzz of conversation was audible above the manager's gasping for breath. "The bomb-in-the-paper-bag gimmick!" belabored a thick-set man. "It's been used in dime novels . . . the movies . . ." "The desperate thief ready to blow himself up!" tittered a bird-like lady in clumsy, walking shoes.

"Awright, mac," the squat bank guard started to wheeze, as he laboriously slid a service revolver from a holster hanging around his stomach. "I'll take that dangerous paper bag, mister blowhard . . ."

The tall man's bloodshot eyes circled the group of sneering faces, darted to the revolver glinting in the guard's hand . . . then he dropped the sack to the floor and sprinted to the door with incredible speed. Before anyone could move, he was gone.

The uncontrolled laughter was a chorus of chuckles, snorts, guffaws, chorles and whinnies. The thick-set man had to be thumped on the back to keep him from choking. When quiet again had been restored, they all turned and looked disdainfully at the paper bag on the floor. The guard stepped forward to pick it up, so that he could haul it into the trash basket . . .

The violent explosion shattered the windows for two blocks around, so sudden was the blast that the occupants of the bank were dead before a single cry of pain or surprise had been uttered. An estimated fifty people in the neighborhood were knocked to the pavement by the detonation of the bank's main bomb.

A tall man in a frazzled coat picked himself up from the sidewalk, patted a coat pocket to make certain that the second of his two crumpled paper bags was unharmed . . . then shambled off in the direction of a bank over on the next avenue.

IN THE BAG

THE NAME'S WILSON... BADGE 35074. I'M A PLAIN-CLOTHED COP. THEY GOT ME PATROLLING THE TIGHTEST SECTION IN TOWN. IT'S A QUIET NIGHT THOUGH, AND I'M NOT COMPLAINTING... 'CEPT THAT THIS JOY BRUZZLE'S CHIRLING ME TO THE BORE...



THE SERGEANT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE MADE MY HEAT THE WINDMILL, THAT DEAD IT IS TONIGHT. THE ONLY SOUND IS THE SWISHY-HEB OF TIRES NOW AND THEN AS A LONE CAR MOVES DOWN THE BLACK, SHINY STREET...



IT'S SURE LOSELE, AND I GET TO THINKING ABOUT STACEY'S JOINT AND HOW COOY HIS BAR ALWAYS IS AND HOW GOOD A SPOT WOULD FEEL WARMING MY INSIDES. I TURN THE CORNER AND HEAD FOR IT WHEN I SPOT THE LITTLE GUY EDGING DOWN THE WET SIDEWALK...



HE KINDA STUMBLES ALONG AS HE COMES TO THE BUILDING. HE'S WEARING ONE OF THOSE LEATHER JACKETS AND HE'S CARRYING SOMETHING... A BAG... A CANVAS BAG WITH MAYBE A BIG ROUND WELD IN IT...



I TAKE A SCOURT AT HIM AS WE PASS EACH OTHER UNDER A LAMP-POST. HE'S GOT BURN-IN CHEEKS AND A WIDE-EYED LOOK... LIKE HE'S SCARED OF SOMETHING...



AND THEN I NOTICE THE BAG AGAIN... AND I SEE IT'S GOT A BIG RED RUST-COLORED STAIN ON THE BOTTOM. IT LOOKS LIKE... LIKE... LIKE DRIED BLOOD, MAYBE...



THE LITTLE BUY DON'T STOP. HE KEEPS ON GOING. I BUZZ HIM AGAIN. I KNOW HE HEARS ME... UNLESS HE'S STONE DEAF...

WOULD IT, BUDDY? I WANT T' TALK TO YOU



HE GIVES ME ONE WILD LOOK, TURNS SHOOT-WHITE AND TAKES OFF. I TROT ALONG AFTER HIM, THINKIN' MAYBE THE POON SLUCER IS JUST SCARED 'CAUSE HE WORKS FOR A BUTCHER AND SWOPS A ROLLED ROAST OR SOMETHING BLOODY LIKE THAT...



IN MY TIME ON THE FORCE, I'VE RUN INTO ALL KINDS OF CRAZY BUNGE...PERVERTS...MANIACS...HOMOSEXUAL FIENDS. I BEGIN PICTURING THIS BUY LURKIN' IN SOME DARK ALLEY WITH AN EMPTY SACK AND A BIG KNIFE...WAITING...



I THINK MY BADGE. I'M WALKING AFTER HIM NOW AND HE'S STARTING TO WALK EVEN FASTER.

I'M A COP, CHUM! FIRST PRESSORT! WHAT'S IN THE BAG?



HE REACHES A CORNER AND DOORS AROUND. BY THE TIME I GET THERE, HE AIN'T IN SIGHT. THERE'S A CAR PARKED AT THE CURB AND I FIGURE HE'S HIDIN' IT...

LISTEN, LISTEN. IF YOU AIN'T DONE NOTHIN' BY NOW, REALLY BY NOW...YOU'RE DRAFF FOR BUNGE! Y'LL GET YOU SOONER OR LATER...



AND I REMEMBER AN OLD BECKER NAMED FISH WHO SAVED UP OLD LADIES. I SEE THIS CREEP JUMPIN' SOME POON OLD GAL AND CRASSIN' HER INTO THE ALLEY...



...AND RACKIN' HER UP AND STUFFIN' HER HEAD IN THAT SATCHEL...THAT BLOODY-BOTTOMED SATCHEL...

I START WONDERIN' IF MAYBE I'VE BEEN A COP TOO LONG. IF MAYBE I GOT TOO MUCH IMAGINATION...IF MAYBE THE MUST-COLORED STAIN AIN'T BLOOD AFTER ALL YEAH? THEN WHAT'S THE CREEP JUMPIN' FOR?



HEFF

THE BUY DON'T LET OUT A HEFF. I START AROUND THE CAR AND OFF HE GOES, LAMMIN' OUT LIKE HE'S CARRYIN' A HOT POTATO...AND I BEGIN THINKIN' THAT MAYBE THAT BLOODY-BOTTOMED SATCHEL AS SOMETHIN' HOT.



THINKING THESE THINGS MAKES ME HATE THE SLOWLY LITTLE RAT. I GOTTA CATCH HIM NOW... CATCH HIM AND FIND OUT FOR SURE. HE TURNS INTO AN ALLEY, AND I'M RIGHT BEHIND HIM, GIVING IT ALL I'VE GOT.



THE POOR IDIOT'S MADE A BIG MISTAKE. THE ALLEY'S BLIND, I GOT HIM TRAPPED. I PULL OUT MY .45 AND MY POCKET FLASH AND START PERCUSSING THE SCUM AROUND...



GET THIS STRAIGHT, MISTER? YOU BURN THIS TIME, AND YOU GET A SCALP IN YOUR BACK...

THE LIGHT PICKS HIM UP CRABBING IN A CELLAR DOORWAY... WHITE AND SHIVERING... GASPING FOR AIR. HE WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND THE SARDINEL AND HUGS IT TO HIM LIKE A LITTLE GIRL WITH A COLLAR...



GRAB, WAG! LET'S HAVE A LOOK!
NO! NO! IT'S MOVE!
A LOOK!

HE STARTS CRYING. I FIGURE HE CAN'T PULL A SHIV ON ME WHILE HE'S HUGGING THE BAG. SO I HOLD STILL BY HIS ARM AND MOVE IN, KEEPING MY LIGHT ON HIM...

THIS LITTLE CHARACTER IS STRONGER THAN HE LOOKS. I TRY WRINGING THE BAG AWAY BUT HE'S GOT IT IN A DEATH GRIP...

I CAN SEE HE'S SCARED BILLY SO I LET GO. HE STARTS TALKING AND I STUDY HIS EYES, TRYIN' TO SEE IF MAYBE HE'S A NUTHEAD...



I CAN'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER, BLOODY I'M THE STUBBORN TYPE. NOW, HAND IT OVER!



'C'MON... YOU DUMB... BASTARD!
WAIT! FIRST... FIRST LET ME TELL YOU WHAT IT IS... AND WHY I DID IT!



I HATED HIM? HE WAS ALWAYS PICKING ON ME. "MR. DOMINIC, YOU'RE TWO HUNDRED LATE!" "MR. DOMINIC, THOSE FIGURES AREN'T VERY HEAVY" MR. DOMINIC, YOUR TIE... YOUR HAIR... YOUR APPEARANCE!"

HE WAS A JOHNNY-COME-LATELY? I WORKED A LONG TIME FOR THE COMPANY BEFORE HE CAME. BUT HE WAS FOUNTAIN-ABBRETIATED... HE HAD A GOOD HEAD ON HIS SHOULDERS. HE BECAME HEAD BOOKKEEPER... MY BOSS?

EVERY DAY HE NEEDED ME? HARRING... HARRING. I'D GET SORE INSIDE... AND GASTY, SOMETIMES. AND I WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING, BUT, HE WOULDN'T LET UP? HE WAS SHREWD... CLEVER... SMART?

SO I BOUGHT AN AYE... HEH, HEH. AND TONIGHT I WAITED FOR HIM? HE... HE'S NOT SHOWN ANY MORE? HE HADN'T GOT A GOOD HEAD ON HIS SHOULDERS ANYMORE?



I'VE GOT IT!

I STICK WITH THE FRONT CAR FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES AS IT CRUISED THE SIDE STREETS. THEN I GET AN IDEA...

LET'S CUT AT THE NEXT CORNER, SULLIVAN. I'M GOING TO TRY IT ON FOOT!

OKAY, MULLOCH



I CLIMB OUT AND WATCH THEM PULL AWAY INTO THE MIST...



I PULL MY COLLAR AROUND MY NECK AND START DOWN THE SHIMMERING SIDEWALK...



AND THEN I HEAR IT...THE CLICK-CLACK OF FEET ECHOING OUT OF THE DRIZZLE...QUICK-MOVING FEET...WAVING...TURNING...UP...



I DUCK BACK INTO A DOORWAY AND WAIT. HE COMES THROUGH THE MIST LIKE A SHADOW...A SHADOW CARRYING A BROWN BAGGED JEWEL BOX...



I GOT YOU... YOU CRAZY BIRD!

I PULL OUT MY .45. HE COMES CLOSER...SWIPPING THE BAG LIKE HE WAS HAPPY...MUSING SOFTLY...



I GOT YOU...

I STEP OUT OF THE DOORWAY AS HE PASSES ME...



HEY! DOWNWICK!

HE SPINS AROUND! I'M NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES. I SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER, BLASTING HIS FACE AWAY IN A RED SMOG...



HE PITCHES FORWARD. THE BAGGAGE BAG DROPS WITH A THUD...



I STAND OVER HIS TWITCHING BODY UNTIL IT DON'T TWITCH ANYMORE.



THEN I LOOK AT THE CANVAS SATCHEL LYING IN THE PUDDLE.



THE PROWL CAR SCREAMS UP.

WE HEARD SHOOT'S ON, IT'S PDD, WLEDDO? WHAT HAWWED?

I GOT HIM? I GOT THE MURKID, SULLIVAN? I HAD TO SHOOT HIM? HE TRIED TO...



I CAN SEE SULLIVAN'S FACE TURN WHITE, AND I CAN HEAR BERBER WHISPERING...



IT... IT CAN'T BE HIM!

OF COURSE, IT'S HIM! LOOK! THERE'S THE CAR! HE'S GOT A HEAD IN THAT BAG? I KNOW IT!



NOT HIM, WLEDDO! NOT THIS GUY! CAR'S JUST HADDED IN THAT THEY GOT YOUR MURKID A FEW MINUTES AGO...



I LOOK DOWN AT THE STILL FIGURE LYING FACE-DOWN ON THE BLOODY, WET SIDEWALK. I LOOK AT THE CANVAS BAG...



IT'S GOF TO MEY IT'S GOF TOE IT'S ROUND? IT'S GOT A HEAD? IT.

I UNZIP THE SATCHEL. THE ROUND BLACK SPHERE MOANS OUT ONTO THE GUTTER...



A BOWLING BALL ON, LORD... IT'S ONLY A BOWLING BALL!

YOU... YOU BETTER GIVE ME YOUR ID/WLEDDO.



THE END

RUN DOWN

IT IS ONE OF THOSE DAMP RAIN NIGHTS WHEN THE SKY IS A BROWNISH-BLACK ARCADE OVER THE SLOWING CITY AND THE GREY RAIN CLINGS TO YOUR CHEEKS LIKE A WET CLAMMY COBWEB. THE SAFFRON FROG BECOMES SOON OF THE JAZZBOY CAVANO CASTS ITS RUBY OVERTONES ON THE GLISTERING SEVEN-ELEVEN, THE CREAM-COLORED CADILLAC, AND THE FLASH-DRESSED GENT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR. AS HE EMERGES FROM THE CASINO AND WALKS TOWARD YOU, WHERE YOU HIDE IN THE ALLEY OPPOSITE HIS CAR, YOU FUMBLE IN YOUR POCKET FOR THE GOLD PEARL HANDLE OF YOUR SWITCHKNIFE. YOUR NAME IS JOE HARRIS. YOU'RE NOT WORTH A DIME. BUT IN A FEW MINUTES YOU'RE GOING TO BE RICH! *NOW!* YOU SLIP THE KNIFE FROM YOUR POCKET, PRESS THE BUTTON, AND AS THE RAZOR-SHARP BLADE SNAPS OUT, YOU THINK, JOE HARRIS... YOU THINK OF LOVE, AND HATE, AND FRUSTRATION, AND *DOWN.*...

YOU THINK OF YOUR BEAUTIFUL WIFE MARRINA, AND THAT NIGHT YOU FOLDED OUT FOR CERTAIN. YOU REMEMBER HOW SHE CAME HOME WITH HER HAIR WILD AND HER LIPSTICK SMOGAGED AND HER CLOTHES WRINKLED AND HUMPLED. . .

IT'S THREE A.M., MARRINA...

NO HISSONN! WELL NOBODY TOLD YOU TO WAIT UP! TURN OVER AND GO TO SLEEP!



YOU REMEMBER THE SMILE OF HER LOVELY MOUTH AS SHE CONFIRMED WHAT YOU'D SUSPECTED FOR WEEKS. . .

YOU'VE... YOU'VE BEEN OUT WITH ANOTHER MAN!

NOT JUST ANOTHER MAN, JOE! THERE'S NO OTHER MAN LIKE HIM! HALEY! HE'S GOT *EVERYTHING*, EXCEPT MONEY! BUT WHEN I'M WITH HIM, I CAN FORGET THAT HE'S JUST A POOR BLOW LIKE YOU!



YOU SPRANG FROM THE BED AND TRIED TO HOLD HER, BUT YOU DROPPED YOUR ARMS WHEN YOU FELT HER SHOULDER... SAW THE REVELATION IN HER FACE...

HOW, MARSHALL? WHY?

I WAS TORNED OF WORKING, JOE! YOU WERE MY DUTY! SO I MARRIED YOU! I THOUGHT YOU HAD SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE UP FOR YOU! BUT YOU HAD NOTHING! YOU'VE GOT NOTHING, JOE! NOTHING!



YOU RECALL NOW CONFUSED YOU WERE... ONLY SURE THAT YOU COULD NEVER STOP LOVING MARSHA... NEVER GIVE HER UP, YOU REMEMBER NOW, THE LAST NIGHT, YOU WATCHED FROM THE WINDOW OF YOUR DARKENED ROOM...



... WATCHED YOUR HANDSOME WIFE BRING MARSHA HOME. YOU SAW THEM STAND CLOSE, SEARCH FOR EACH OTHER'S LIPS, THEN TREMBLE IN WHAT SEEMED LIKE A NEVER-ENDING EMBRACE...



YOU TURNED AWAY, YOUR HEART POUNDING... YOUR TEMPLES THROBBING...

I'VE GOT TO GET HER BACK! MONEY! THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN DO IT! I'VE GOT TO GET MONEY, FAST!



YOU THOUGHT ABOUT IT ALL NIGHT AND THIS MORNING, JOE... AND LIKE A DROWNING MAN CLUTCHING AT STRAW, YOU GRABBED DESPERATELY AT A LONDSHOT...

YOU SAY YOU WANT TO CLOSE YOUR ACCOUNT, MR. HARRIST?

YEAH... THE WHOLE FORTY-THREE BUCKS!



YES, JOE, YOU DECIDED TO SHOOT THE WORK, YOU DREW OUT ALL OF YOUR SAVINGS THIS AFTERNOON ON YOUR LUNCH HOUR, AND A LITTLE WHILE AGO, YOU BOUGHT FORTY-THREE DOLLARS WORTH OF CHIPS AT THE GLOVED CASINO, PUT THE WHOLE STACK ON "RED", AND MURMURED A LITTLE PRAYER...

O'ROG, BABY... FOR ME AND MARSHA...

ALL BETS DOWN!



THEY POUR FROM THE DOORWAYS INTO THE ALLEY, JOE! PEOPLE... HUNDREDS OF THEM. IT'S A **MOVIE THEATER!** THE **LITE SHOW** IS OVER! WITH A STRENGTH BORN OF FRUSTRATION YOU PUSH YOUR BONY LEGS BACK INTO THE CADILLAC...



YOU FIND A DARK DESERTED SMILEY STREET. YOU FALL UP TO THE CURB OPPOSITE A SEWER. YOU GET OUT, LIFT OPEN THE SEWER-COVER, AND GRAB THE BLOODY FORM FROM THE CAR...



NOW, WITH THE HEAVY IRON LID BACK IN PLACE, YOU BREATHE EASILY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AN HOUR. YOU GLANCE DOWN THE STREET... AND **YOUR HEART STOPS!** POLICE MEN. A PAIR OF THEM... **COMING YOUR WAY!**



YOU ZOOM AWAY, CURSING, NOPING AGAIN THAT YOU WRENCH TOOK...



THEN YOU PUSH THE STEPPING COBBER DOWN INTO THE STINKING BLACK HOLE...



WITH GOADING EYES, YOU BEGIN TO WALK, BLANCING-BACK FURTHER AT THE OFFICERS APPROACHING THE SEWER. YOU SEE ONE OF THEM STOP AND POINT...



YOU SEE THEM STEP TO THE SEWER. SEE ONE OF THEM BEND DOWN, THEN LOOK UP AT YOU... **RIGHT AT YOU, JOE!** HE CALLS OUT...



RUN, JOE! THAT'S IT! RUN!
THEY KNOW! THEY'RE AFTER
YOU!

I CAN'T LET 'EM GET ME NOW...
NOT WHEN I GOT EVERYTHING I
NEED!... ALL THE DODDER I'LL
EVER NEED... AND MARINA...



YOU DODGE AND DODDER LIKE A
RABBIT, JOE, BUT THE COPE STICK
WITH YOU LIKE GLUE... SHOUTING
AT YOU!



YOU'RE ALMOST HOME, JOE! RUN,
JOE! CROSS THE STREET! SOON YOU'LL
LOOK OUT, JOE! THAT CAR!



IT HITS YOU... CRASHES YOUR LEG IN ITS BUMPER... TRYING
TO LIFTING SOME... KNOCKING YOU DOWN... THE FRONT
WHEEL PLOWS OVER YOUR BELLY... CRUSHING YOUR GUTS...



IF YOU COULD ONLY BLACK OUT! BUT YOU CAN'T,
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THE HELLISH AGONY, YOU SEE
THE CAR BACK OFF... SEE THE DRIVER GET OUT...
THE COP'S POINTING AT...



DON'T WORRY,
MISTER! WE SAW
IT HAPPEN! IT
WASN'T YOUR
FAULT!

I CAN'T FIGURE WHY THE
SCREWBALL WAS LIKE THAT.
WE WERE JUST TRYING TO
RETURN THIS EMPTY
WALLET HE DROPPED BY THAT
SEWER...

YOU'VE GOT ONE HUNDRED GRAND AND YOU LIE IN THE
BUTTER, JOE... A GROSSQUE TWISTED MALK, BATTERED
BY AN OLD HEAP OF A CAR. *WOW!* LOOK AT THE
DRIVER'S FACE! *YEC!* JOE! IT'S WALLY. YOUR WIFE'S
LOVER! HE'S SMILING DOWN AT YOU AS AN EFFICIENT
COP'S HANDS FLY THROUGH YOUR POCKET!



HEY, LOOK AT THIS
MAD OF LETTUCE!

IT... IT'S... OH, MY GOD...
IT'S MY HUSBAND!

HERE'S YOUR WIFE, JOE. MARINA... SHE'S STANDING
OVER YOU, TOO, TALKING TO THE COP!



YOUR HUSBAND, EN, LADY? WELL...
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS IDENTIFY
YOURSELF AND YOU CAN PICK UP
THIS BANKROLL AT HEADQUARTERS
TOMORROW!

OF COURSE,
OFFICER!

THE LAST THING YOU SEE IS MARINA AND WALLY
STEALING A QUICK LOOK AT EACH OTHER... A QUIET
LOOK THAT SAYS *SO MUCH*... LIKE, "WE NEVER
EXPECTED *THIS*! HAPPY TURN OF EVENTS WHEN WE
PLANNED ON RUNNING HIM DOWN!" AND THEN,
SLOWLY, EVERYTHING GOES BLACK.